

# You Should Know...

On January 22, 2003, U.S. Senator Ben Nelson along with Senator Tom Daschle and others fought for a drought relief plan that would provide much-needed assistance to drought-stricken farmers and ranchers. Their amendment was defeated, and the Senate instead passed a Republican-backed measure that favors southern producers and short-changes Nebraskans and others suffering drought damage.

## Daschle-Nelson Disaster Amendment

### **\$4.5 billion in funding for crop losses.**

No special grants are reserved for special crops. Instead, payments are based on actual crop losses that occurred during the 2001 *and* 2002.

### **\$1.5 billion for livestock and forage losses.**

Payments are based on actual hay losses.

### **Eligibility is based on actual losses.**

Payments can be made to any producer who has experienced at least a 35% loss of their crop or hay.

**Total relief provided by the Daschle-Nelson Amendment: \$6 billion**

## Cochran Disaster Amendment

### **\$2 billion in funding for crop losses.**

However, portions of that funding are reserved for special classes of producers. Examples:

Tobacco producers will enjoy a \$53 million special grant

Cotton producers will receive a \$50 million special grant.

Some producers will share \$10 million just because they live in Texas.

These classes of producers would get benefits regardless of whether or not they actually suffered a crop loss.

### **\$350 million for livestock and forage losses.**

However, livestock producers who received aid in 2002 would likely not qualify for additional assistance in 2003. Those who did qualify would be unlikely to receive any significant relief.

### **Eligibility is based on geography.**

Payment can be made to all producers in any county that is declared a disaster, regardless of whether or not they actually lost a crop.

**Total cost of the Cochran plan: \$3.1 billion**

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The Cochran disaster assistance amendment passed the U.S. Senate by a vote of 59-35. It was a defeat against all Nebraska ranchers and producers who have suffered greatly during the two-year drought "David" that began in 2001. Senators Nelson and Daschle will continue to press for passage of their drought relief package, hoping to see it passed through the Senate and signed into law by President Bush.

## ...Nebraska Deserves Better